

### AMENDMENTS TO CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as indicated hereinafter.

1. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:

receiving, at a merge utility executing on a computer system, a request to merge a first merge document that is in a merge format with a second document in an original format;

wherein the second document was created in said original format by a first document authoring application;

in response to the request, the merge utility causing ~~converting a~~ the second document to be converted from ~~an~~ the original format to the merge format to create a second merge document;

~~wherein the second document was created by a first document authoring application;~~

wherein the second merge document is in the merge format;

wherein the step of converting is performed by either the merge utility or the first document authoring application;

~~using the merge utility executing on the computer system,~~ merging the first merge document and the second merge document to generate a composite merge document; and

after generating the composite merge document, delivering the merge utility causing said composite merge document to be delivered to an output device;

wherein the output device is a device that is different from the computer system;

wherein the original format is a format that is not supported by the output device, and therefore needs to be converted to another format that is supported by the output device in order to be properly interpreted by the output device; and

wherein the merge format is a format that is supported by the output device, and therefore does not need to be converted to another format that is supported by the output device in order to be properly interpreted by the output device;

wherein the method is performed by one or more computing devices.

2. (original) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original document from an original format to the merge format.
3. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF).
4. (original) The method of Claim 3, wherein the merge format is PDL Postscript.
5. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first document is a background template document and the second document is an overlay document.
6. (previously presented) The method of Claim 5,  
wherein the background template document is originally created by a second document authoring application; and  
wherein the second document authoring application is different from said first document authoring application.
7. (original) The method of Claim 5, wherein the background template document is created in a second original format and converted from the second original format to the merge format.
8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~7~~ 1, wherein ~~causing the conversion of the second original document to be converted from the original format to the merge format occurs~~  
atcomprises the merge utility converting the second document to the merge format.
9. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~the converting of causing the second document to be converted~~  
the merge utility generating, based on the original format, a set of conversion instructions to convert the second document into said second merge document;  
passing the set of conversion instructions from the merge utility to the first document authoring application; ~~and~~

wherein the conversion instructions, when interpreted by the first document authoring application, cause the first document authoring application to ~~generating-generate~~ the second merge document based on said set of conversion instructions.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein ~~the method further comprises receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents,~~ the request containing contains information about the first document authoring application, wherein ~~the converting of causing~~ the second document to be converted from the original format to the merge format to create the second merge document includes:

the merge utility generating, based on the information about the first document authoring application, a set of conversion instructions to convert the second document into said second merge document;  
passing the set of conversion instructions from the merge utility to the first document authoring application; and  
wherein the conversion instructions, when interpreted by the first document authoring application, cause the first document authoring application to ~~generating-generate~~ the second merge document based on said set of conversion instructions.

11. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the composite merge document is in the merge format.

12. (original) The method of Claim 1, wherein the composite merge document is a template for creating other documents.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1, ~~further comprising:~~  
~~receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents;~~  
wherein the steps of ~~converting-causing~~ the second document to be converted and merging the first merge document and the second merge document are both performed in response to the merge utility receiving the request to merge documents.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:  
~~receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents;~~

generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original document from an original format to the merge format;  
wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF);  
wherein the first document is a background template document and the second document is an overlay document;  
wherein the background template document is originally created by a second document authoring application; and  
wherein the second document authoring application is different from said first document authoring application;  
wherein the background template document is created in a second original format and converted from the second original format to the merge format.

15. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable storage medium storing one or more sequences of instructions, which when executed by one or more processors, causes:

receiving, at a merge utility executing on a computer system, a request to merge a first merge document that is in a merge format with a second document in an original format;

wherein the second document was created in said original format by a first document authoring application;

in response to the request, the merge utility causing converting a the second document to be converted from an the original format to the merge format to create a second merge document;

~~wherein the second document was created by a first document authoring application;~~

wherein the second merge document is in the merge format;

wherein the step of converting is performed by either the merge utility or the first document authoring application;

~~using the merge utility executing on the computer system, merging the first merge document and the second merge document to generate a composite merge document; and~~

after generating the composite merge document, delivering the merge utility causing said composite merge document to be delivered to an output device;

wherein the output device is a device that is different from the computer system;  
wherein the original format is a format that is not supported by the output device, and  
therefore needs to be converted to another format that is supported by the output  
device in order to be properly interpreted by the output device; and  
wherein the merge format is a format that is supported by the output device, and therefore  
does not need to be converted to another format that is supported by the output  
device in order to be properly interpreted by the output device.

16. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15, wherein the one  
or more sequences of instructions, when executed by one or more processors, further causes:

generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original  
document from an original format to the merge format.

17. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the  
merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF).

18. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 17 wherein the  
merge format is PDL Postscript.

19. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the first  
document is a background template document and the second document is an overlay document.

20. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 19,  
wherein the background template document is originally created by a second document  
authoring application; and  
wherein the second document authoring application is different from said first document  
authoring application.

21. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 19 wherein the  
background template document is created in a second original format and converted from the  
second original format to the merge format.

22. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 24–15 wherein  
causing the conversion of the second original document to be converted from the original format

to the merge format ~~occurs at~~ comprises the merge utility converting the second document to the merge format.

23. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein ~~the converting of causing~~ the second document to be converted from the original format to the merge format to create the second merge document includes:

the merge utility generating, based on the original format, a set of conversion instructions to convert the second document into said second merge document;  
passing the set of conversion instructions from the merge utility to the first document authoring application; ~~and~~  
wherein the conversion instructions, when interpreted by the first document authoring application, cause the first document authoring application to generating-generate the second merge document based on said set of conversion instructions.

24. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein ~~the one or more sequences of instructions, when executed by one or more processors, further causes receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents, the request containing contains~~ information about the first document authoring application, wherein ~~the converting of causing~~ the second document to be converted from the original format to the merge format to create the second merge document includes:

the merge utility generating, based on the information about the first document authoring application, a set of conversion instructions to convert the second document into said second merge document;  
passing the set of conversion instructions from the merge utility to the first document authoring application; and  
wherein the conversion instructions, when interpreted by the first document authoring application, cause the first document authoring application to generating-generate the second merge document based on said set of conversion instructions.

25. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the composite merge document is in the merge format.

26. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the composite merge document is a template for creating other documents.

27. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 ~~wherein the one or more sequences of instructions, when executed by one or more processors, further causes :~~  
~~receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents;~~

wherein the steps of ~~converting~~ causing the second document to be converted and  
merging the first merge document and the second merge document are both  
performed in response to the merge utility receiving the request to merge  
documents.

28. (Currently Amended) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the one or more sequences of instructions, when executed by one or more processors, further causes :

~~receiving, at the merge utility, a request to merge documents;~~

generating the first merge document in said merge format by converting a first original  
document from an original format to the merge format;

wherein the merge format is Standard Printing and Imaging Format (SPIF);

wherein the first document is a background template document and the second document  
is an overlay document;

wherein the background template document is originally created by a second document  
authoring application; and

wherein the second document authoring application is different from said first document  
authoring application;

wherein the background template document is created in a second original format and  
converted from the second original format to the merge format.

29. (previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the first merge document is a version of a first document that has been converted from an original format to the merge format.

30. (Canceled)

31. (previously presented) The machine-readable storage medium of Claim 15 wherein the first merge document is a version of a first document that has been converted from an original format to the merge format.

32. (Canceled)